

sunshine; the air was fresh and the morning fair, and so I stepped out on the lawn, and taking the path which led temptingly through the garden I came to a boat-house on the bank. Inside were stored punts, canoes, cobbles, and a roomy launch, which I proceeded to make my headquarters, piling up the cushions in the lockers so as to form a luxurious couch, on which I lay awake pondering on the situation. 'Here at all events I shall escape the persecution, whatever it was.' And what could it be but a shameful device of some malignant night-walker? I reasoned out the whole question with myself till nature asserted herself despite my awful warnings, and once more my heavy eyelids closed in slumber.

I was awakened by and by, but it was not by a cold hand. The laird was shaking me by the shoulder with all his vigorous might: 'You have given us all such a fright! What has happened? My servant found your room in the greatest disorder when he went out to you this morning. However, I thought you might have gone out for an early stroll, though you were badly provided for it. Your servant arrived at eight o'clock, and I sent one of the men with him to look for you. At breakfast time my daughter told the housekeeper one of the maids had been frightened out of her wits by a white figure in the billiard room this morning; presently comes in a report that one of the gardeners boys had seen a wild-looking man in a strange dress making for the river as he was going to his work. So we all turned out to look for you. What the deuce does it all mean? It is near ten o'clock—just time to get back, dress, breakfast, and start for our shoot. We drive the woods at eleven o'clock.'

Clothed, if not altogether in my right mind, I went to the breakfast room, where the daughter of the house was waiting for me alone at the tea table.

'A thousand pardons for keeping you! I really am ashamed of all the trouble I have given you.'

'It is we who should be ashamed of putting you into that wretched room where you could not sleep. Was it the clock kept you awake?'

'Well, no! I don't think it was the clock.'

'What, then, do you think it was—the strange bed?'

'It is hard to say—a stupid joke that must have kept some one busy all night.'

'A joke? I don't understand you.'

'Some one thought it good fun and worth his while to draw something like a glove stuffed with ice across my face whenever I went to sleep, and—'

She dropped the cup and sat staring at me with a strange expression. 'Like a hand? How dreadful! Pray have you told my father about it? I am so sorry for it.' She paused and looked at me earnestly.

'No, not yet! I am more grieved than I can say to be the cause of all this trouble, but I shall find out all about it by and by.'

'Have you ever heard any story about this place before you came here? Perhaps——' she stopped, and then with great earnestness exclaimed, 'I am sure it was not done to annoy you! not done by any one in the castle! Long ago there were odd noises heard there, it is said; but the steward before the present one lived in the room, and indeed it was often used for a visitor when the house was full for the night. Oh! I am very sorry you had to sleep—try to sleep there, I mean—last night.'

Her agitation was extreme. I was glad when I was told the guns were ready. But it set me thinking. It was very curious. Why was she so sure that none of the guests had plagued me—that it was not a joke? Why was her father embarrassed, and indeed displeased, when I told him as we were returning from the day's shooting that I intended to find out if any of the party in the castle were engaged in the joke?

'No! I must beg of you as a great favour not to speak to any of them, or to allude to the matter at present. They are my guests, and I am responsible for them. I can assure you not one of them had anything whatever to say to the "joke," as you call it. You will have no further visitations, I promise you, and I hope you will make up, by a good night's rest in another room, for the owls or bats that molested you in the turret.' That icy hand! Owls or bats!

When I was dressing for dinner that night my old soldier servant, who was as arrant coward in the case of ghostly enemies as he was gallant in the field, observed, 'It's well, sir, they've changed the room on you! I would have been afeared to have took up your hot water in the dark! I heard all about it from the butler in sayeret, but it's as much as their places is worth to say a word in the servants' hall.'

'Of what, Pat?'

'Oh, then, and it's your honour knows! I'd rather not spake till we're out of the castle.'

I felt bound by the wishes of my host and his fair daughter not to allude to the subject whilst I was an inmate of the castle then, and when years afterwards I was told the story connected with the place I listened to it under a promise that I would refrain from giving any account of my experiences in the turret till a period of time, which has now elapsed, should have passed over my head.

Some 300 years ago there was enacted in that turret room a cruel deed. The Earl of Strathfillan, who had just come of age, had been summoned home from Sweden by his mother, who had arranged a marriage for him with an heiress, who would bring to the decaying house much-needed wealth. He had been sent by her two years before to her brother, who held a high position in the Court of Gustavus, from the evil influences which convulsed Scotland and filled the land with